CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesady, 13 March 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Emeka Ayo Azikiwe (Nigeria)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 542nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conformity with its programme of work, the Conference begins today its consideration of agenda item 3, "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters". In accordance with rule 30 of its rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of the United State of America and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, the United States delegation and I personally would like to join with those who have already congratulated you upon your assumption of the presidency during the second month of the Conference on Disarmament's 1990 session. Under your guidance, we have already established the Ad hoc Committee for outer space, an important achievement in the eyes of my Government, and admitted several non-member participants to the CD. The United States delegation would like to assure you of its support and co-operation in the challenges we face during this month. I would also like to congratulate Ambasador Wagenmakers of the Netherlands, as others have done, for his superior leadership and achievements during his February presidency of this distinguished body.

Two weeks ago, I had occasion to address the Conference on chemical weapons. Chemical weapons is not my main topic this morning, but I would like to underscore the thrust of Minister Batsanov's statement last Thursday. My Government is pleased with the productive nature of the CW United States-Soviet bilateral round just completed. Our joint progress in reaching a bilateral agreement on destruction of chemical weapons stocks can only further efforts in this body to finish drafting a multilateral CW convention at the earliest date.

Chemical weapons are high on the United States Government's arms control agenda. Let me turn to the subject of nuclear weapons, another item on this agenda. We start from the fact that for more than 40 years, a strong nuclear deterrent has been necessary to ensure the security of the United States. It has helped preserve the security and freedom of our allies and friends. The long European peace of the last 45 years has, I believe, led to the situation we have today, in which the winds of freedom are sweeping through so many countries. The long period of stability has purchased time in which our attention could turn from survival to human and political rights.

Nuclear deterrence remains a critical component of United States security strategy. As Secretary of State Baker said to the Supreme Soviet last month, as long as we must rely on nuclear weapons to secure peace by deterring aggression, we will need a safe, reliable and modern stockpile. That means we will continue to need to conduct some underground nuclear tests.

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

The United States adheres to a step-by-step process towards further limits on nuclear testing. We remain committed to a comprehensive test ban as a long-term goal. However, as Under-Secretary Karhilo of Finland astutely observed in his speech here on 20 February, there is no short-cut to a CTB. It must be built as you would build a bridge across a chasm, laying plank by plank on a solid foundation so that it will remain strong and reliable for generations.

The United States seeks a CTB in the context of a time when we do not have to depend on nuclear deterrence to ensure international security and stability, and when we have achieved broad, deep and effectively verifiable arms reductions, substantially improved verification capabilities and greater balance in conventional forces.

Let me pause here for a moment to focus on the question of verification. A CTB without adequate verification is not a treaty; it is a temptation. Much work remains to be done to develop a credible system for verifying compliance with a CTB in spite of the popular belief that the technology is available now. The United States for its part, continues to support the work of the Group of Scientific Experts and will fully participate in its Second Technical Test. We are deeply disappointed that so many States, including some that regularly call for a CTB, have not seen fit to take part in this important experiment.

The United States is grateful for the efforts of Ambassador Donawaki of Japan and his predecessor, Ambassador Yamada, to find a consensus on a mandate for an ad hoc committee on item 1 of our agenda. Let me be clear. The United States and the Western Group are willing to re-establish an ad hoc committee and have been since 1984. For two years, we have been ready to set aside our own proposed mandate text in order to work towards consensus on the basis of the compromise text drafted by Ambassador Vejvoda. The United States is still willing to do that. We are puzzled that others are unwilling to do the same. None the less, the United States has been actively pursuing reductions of nuclear arms in bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union. I believe an objective observer must be pleased - and heartened - by the progress we have made. The INF Treaty has been in place for more than 20 months. At the February United States-Soviet Ministerial in Moscow, major steps were taken in negotiations on reducing strategic weapons, and our nuclear testing delegations are working diligently to complete the protocols for the threshold test ban and peaceful nuclear explosions treaties in time for signature at the summit this coming June.

Times are changing, more hopefully perhaps than at any time in history. But change is inevitably a time of uncertainty, turmoil, and fear as well as of hope. The challenge for all of us is to see that these changes continue peacefully and positively. It is no time to abandon the structures that have brought us this far.

On 5 March, the President of the United States issued a statement in recognition of the 20th anniversary of one of the principal foundations of international security today - the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. Later

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

this year the parties to the NPT will hold its fourth review conference. In the context of that review, President Bush reaffirmed "the determination of the United States to carry out its treaty commitments and to work to assure its continuance in the interest of world peace and security". I have asked the secretariat to circulate the President's statement as a CD document.

Our Conference also has an agenda item on the question of "negative security assurances", the provision of assurances from the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The United States had publicly stated that:

> "The United States will not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State, party to the NPT or any comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such a State allied to a nuclear-weapon State or associated with a nuclear-weapon State in carrying out or sustaining the attack."

We stand by this assurance as a firm and reliable statement of United States policy. We have, nevertheless, willingly participated in the CD's efforts to develop effective arrangements and, more specifically, in the search for a common formula acceptable to all. Agreement to date on effective arrangements has been elusive because specific security concerns of all the individual participants are involved - nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. We are ready and willing to contribute constructively to these efforts again this year, and I pledge the support and co-operation of my delegation to our distinguished Italian colleague, Ambassador Negrotto Cambiaso, who serves as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee.

Since 1985, the Conference has considered, in successive ad hoc committees, questions related to the "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". The United States has conducted its own examination of possible measures that might be feasible and desirable to serve as the basis for possible negotiations on further multilateral arms control agreements that apply to outer space. To date, my Government has yet to see any proposals from others that we believe are feasible, desirable, and verifiable. And we ourselves have not identified any such appropriate measures to propose. We offer our support and co-operation to my distinguished colleage Ambassador Shannon of Canada in his chairmanship of the Ad hoc Committee established last week, and we are prepared to consider any proposal that emerges there. But we are not able to accept calls for multilateral negotiations in this area.

My delegation is pleased that the Ad hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons has met. We pledge our co-operation to Ambassador Varga of Hungary in his progress in the Committee, and hope that somehow we might be able to move negotiations forward on at least the "traditional" subject. On the question of prohibiting attacks against nuclear facilities, my delegation is not convinced of the need for additional measures in this area, and we continue to oppose any linkage of the prohibition of attacks on nuclear facilities with a radiological weapons ban.

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

I have yet to address questions relating to agenda items on "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters" and cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. We remain of the view, that the prevention of a nuclear war can only be dealt with satisfactorily in the broader context of the prevention of war in general. The real question at issue is how to maintain peace and international security in the nuclear age. In this regard, nuclear war cannot be isolated from the problem of the prevention of all war. Therefore, the United States cannot join consensus on establishing an ad hoc committee on this item.

Finally, I would like to add a personal word about this Conference. I refer to the thoughtful statement offered several weeks ago by my distinguished Brazilian colleague, Ambassador de Azambuja, in which he suggested that we examine ways to make the CD more relevant to the real world. I completely agree with this suggestion. The epochal changes taking place in Europe, and the resulting amelioration of East-West tensions, is shifting the focus of arms control to problem areas that have long festered in the shadows. Such problems will likely comprise the coming agenda of this Conference. Some members of this forum, unfortunately, seem to view it primarily as a political forum in which to preach to the nuclear Powers, especially the super-Powers, about nuclear issues. For too long we have listened to sanctimonious speeches which appealed to sentiment rather than taking account of realities, for example by urging that nuclear weapons somehow be disinvented. And for too long we have heard nuclear deterrence derided by some who have benefited from the period of peace it made possible. For years we have lived with non-negotiable agenda items such as Prevention of nuclear war, Cessation of the nuclear arms race, and Comprehensive programme of disarmament, which have not really served the negotiating process, but have been used instead to make political points. Moreover, the process has been reinforced through the device of voting General Assembly resolutions on matters critical to the United States and other nations, and then quoting them in this forum as if they were holy writ. The effect has been to undermine the CD's mandate as a genuine arms control negotiating forum - the one broad international arms control body that has a chance to achieve real results rather than political posturing, because it works by consensus.

The United States has worked in good faith to make the CD a viable institution. We have sought to make arms control work, to establish principles and reach agreements that would improve the security of everyone. We have also learned our limits: for instance, we have found that setting examples which we are assured others will follow often results in pressure for more examples, with little attention to whether anyone has followed the original example. When we unilaterally declared our CW stocks, only the USSR followed our example. We are still waiting for other declarations. This atmosphere is not helpful to the CD's objectives, and it makes it harder for my country to place its full confidence in this Organization's work.

The record shows that this forum operates at its best when its members identify common arms control interests, and then proceed on the basis of consensus to reach agreements of usefulness to all. It is this objective

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

which we should seek to widen in the new era which faces us. There is much to be done. We could, for instance, explore the possibility of taking up regional security questions and regional arms races, and we could examine conventional arms imbalances outside of Europe. We could consider the costly burden placed on limited economies by the need to procure high-tech, super-sophisticated weapons systems. It seems to me that many of the "real world" problems alluded to by Ambassador de Azambuja relate to these areas. They could be the basis for realistic and meaningful additions to our negotiating agenda.

These are some of the ideas that have occured to me as I reflected on the thoughtful questions raised by my distinguished Brazilian colleague. In closing, let me say again that the United States will continue to pursue vigorously the conclusion of disarmament agreements that enhance the security of all members of the community of nations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mr. Abdul-Aziz Omar.

Mr. OMAR (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (translated from Arabic): I am happy and honoured to address this august Conference for the first time. Allow me, Sir, to express our congratulations to you on taking up the presidency of this Conference for this month. We are sure that your wide experience will be of the greatest assistance in the attainment of excellent results. I wish to express our gratitude and appreciation for the endeavours of your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, who guided the work of this Conference during the month of February. I would like also to express our appreciation to you and to all the members of the Conference who responded positively to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya's request to participate as an observer in the plenary meetings of the Conference and its Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.

Although our participation last year was limited owing to our limited experience in the field, we intend to develop our participation in the future in co-operation with the developing countries, in order to make it more effective. I am happy to be addressing the body which was assigned by the General Assembly to consider the question of disarmament referred to in paragraph 1 of article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations. This question relates closely to the purposes of the United Nations, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security and the development of friendly relations among nations. If these purposes are achieved in the manner envisioned, they will provide all nations, and particularly the nations of the third world, with real opportunities for economic and social progress and development.

(Mr. Omar, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya expressed its overall views on the question of disarmament in the statement delivered by the Secretary of the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation before the Paris Conference in January 1989. He said:

> "Complete and comprehensive disarmament under effective international control is the ultimate aim which the peoples of the world are pursuing. All States, and particularly those which possess nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, have the obligation to strive resolutely and diligently to achieve this objective while totally respecting the purposes and principles expressed in the Charter of the United Nations, in accordance with the priorities defined in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, namely the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and conventional weapons".

This comprehensive view, which is shared by many States, stems from a full awareness of the appalling dangers facing our planet as a result of the production, stockpiling and possible use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. In fact, the scenes of mass destruction caused by atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan still haunt the minds of present-day generations. Thousands of persons are still suffering from their painful and lethal effects. Moreover, we are still suffering directly from the scourge of two world wars and their residual legacy in the shape of minefields laid by belligerent armies in our territory. My country was the first in the African continent and in the world as a whole to fall victim to the use of chemical weapons after the First World War. It is a proven historical fact that, on 31 July 1930, the Fascist colonial forces dropped 24 mustard gas bombs, weighing 21 kilograms each, over the peaceful oasis of Tazirbou in central Libya, thereby causing considerable loss of life among men, women and children.

My country has given practical expression to its awareness of this danger through its endeavours, within the international community and the United Nations system, to ensure the adoption of measures to speed up the process of comprehensive disarmament, to consolidate and maintain international peace and security. As part of these endeavours, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has acceded to the following international instruments: the partial test-ban Treaty, the outer space Treaty, the Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Moreover, my country has worked for the conclusion, within IAEA, of a convention on the inspection of nuclear installations for peaceful purposes.

My country has followed with great interest the progress of negotiations on arms control and disarmament and is happy to note that these negotiations are being conducted actively at all bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. In the statement issued by the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation on 13 February 1990,

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my country welcomed the Soviet-United States statement issued in Moscow concerning the agreement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries on the need to eliminate chemical weapons throughout the world and their determination to work for the signature and application of a multilateral agreement prohibiting the production and use of chemical weapons and providing for the world-wide elimination of the stockpiles of such weapons. My country, having already expressed its hope that this agreement will be applied fully, and having reiterated its clear position in regard to these and other types of weapons of mass destruction, calls for the adoption of more far-reaching measures for the elimination of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and the destruction of the stockpiles of these weapons in order to protect mankind from their dangers and preclude any possibility of their use. This statement was issued as an official document of this Conference (CD/970) on 20 February 1990.

Moreover, in paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Great Green Document on Human Rights, which was issued as an official document of the United Nations General Assembly under the symbol A/44/331 on 19 June 1989, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya adopted the following principles regarding the arms trade, the cessation of arms production and atomic, biological and chemical weapons:

> "23. The members of the society of the Jamahiriya believe that peace among nations can bring about well-being, prosperity and concord, and they call for the abolition of the arms trade and an end to the manufacture of arms, since it represents a squandering of the wealth of the masses, constitutes a burden on individuals, because of taxation, and presents mankind with the spectre of mass destruction.
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> "24. The members of the society of the Jamahiriya call for the abolition of atomic, biological and chemical weapons and means of mass destruction and for the destruction of existing stockpiles. They call for the release of mankind from atomic plants and the threat of nuclear waste."

My country is also following with you the sincere efforts aimed at the drafting and conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction.

I do not believe, and nobody believes, that there is any ambiguity in the Libyan position regarding nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons. However, all of you are aware of the White House announcement on 7 March that "available evidence suggests that chemical weapons are being produced at the Rabta plant in Libya", and that this called for international efforts to shut down the facility. "We are very seriously concerned about this development", said White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater in reference to the plant. He said the Rabta facility was dangerous and becoming more so. There was a necessity for heightened international vigilance of Libyan procurement activities and for vigorous efforts to stop the Rabta operation, he declared. He also said that the Administration had expressed its serious concern to various Governments, and that the international community should step up its efforts to deny Libya the ability to continue operating the plant. "This is a subject we have under

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continual discussion with our allies and others and we intend to press ahead with those discussions in the coming days". Answering questions, the spokesman said: "We certainly would urge all countries to survey their internal situation, inventory their chemical production facilities and make their own judgements that they are not a source for any of these chemicals". The spokesman urged his questioners to focus not on who was giving the Libyans the chemicals but rather on the Libyan leader and on the country that was producing chemical weapons. When he was asked to define what he meant by vigorous efforts to stop the operation, Mr. Fitzwater replied that he was not willing to speculate on specific efforts, but that nothing was ruled out.

Immediately after the White House announcement, the People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Co-operation issued a statement in Tripoli which denied all these allegations and reaffirmed the full commitment of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to all international instruments and efforts aimed at the prohibition of the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and expressed Libyan readiness to co-operate with any constructive international efforts to that end. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has repeatedly explained to the whole world the nature of the Rabta plant. In its statement issued in document CD/970, Libya invited States and companies throughout the world which were concerned with the production of pharmaceuticals to participate with us in the production of medicines and medical equipment. In fact, Libya took a further step when the General People's Congress, on the conclusion of its sixteenth session on 9 March declared its support for any measures that might be adopted by the international community in regard to the verification and inspection of chemical weapons, provided that those measures were applied to all States. The same statement was also made by our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York on 8 March.

As you are aware, this is not the first time that the United States Administration has made such allegations against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. Likewise, this is not the first time that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has denied these unfounded allegations by the United States Administration. However, the fact remains that these announcements and this intense propaganda campaign raise many questions concerning their nature and their real underlying motives.

I do not wish to prolong my statement. However, in view of our firm position to which I have already referred, I would like to question the reason why Libya has been singled out by the United States. The distinguished representative of the United States of America stated before this Conference, on 27 February 1990, that there are more than 20 States that have or are seeking chemical weapons. The question once again is: Why single out Libya? I would also ask him whether his list includes Israel. If so, could the United States Administration inform the Conference or international public opinion about the types of chemical weapons that Israel possesses or is producing, and whether the United States Administration dare say about Israel what it is alleging about Libya? The same questions can be raised regarding South Africa and its co-operation with Israel in this field. By what right does the United States Administration set itself up as prosecutor and judge

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while the international community is considering this matter? In fact, the United States Administration is seeking a pretext to commit yet another of its repeated acts of aggression against Libya. The United States declarations contain an open threat to use force against Libya, in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. Such an act would have an adverse effect on the peace and security of the central Mediterranean region. The United States Administration seems fond of committing aggression against small peoples, as has happened in a number of cases, most recently in Panama. Such declarations also imply a hostile incitement to States not to deal with Libya, in an attempt to expand the scope of the economic embargo which the United States has imposed on Libya in total disregard of the obligations of the United States, as a major Power, to preserve international peace and security and to promote friendly relations among nations.

I urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to show understanding for the Libyan position on this matter. I hope that the United States Administration will heed the rule of law and wisdom and resort to dialogue instead of provocation and the threat of force.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): I would simply like to state our regret at the Libyan choice of this forum to make its response to statements about Libyan chemical weapons capabilities that were made in Washington. The White House spokesman has commented on this matter in some detail; those comments were not made in the context of our negotiations here, but since the representative of Libya has raised them here this morning, I can only state that my authorities stand by those comments.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to recall that the Ad hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons will hold its opening meeting of the present annual session immediately after this plenary meeting, in this Council Chamber.

I have no other business for today, and I therefore intend to adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 15 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.